

## BOOK REVIEW

IAN R. HALL, GORDON T. BROWN, AND ALESSANDRA ZAMBONELLI. 2007. **Taming the Truffle: The History, Lore, and Science of the Ultimate Mushroom.** (ISBN 978-0881928600, hbk.). Timber Press, Inc., 133 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 450, Portland, Oregon 97204-3527, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.timberpress.com, mail@timberpress.com, 1-503-227-2878, 1-800-327-5680, 1-503-227-3070 fax). \$29.95, 304 pp., 9" × 6".

*Contents:*

Preface

Acknowledgments

1. From the Past Comes the Present.—Regions of Renown; *La Grande Mystique*; The Golden Age of Truffles; Magical Powers and Medicinal Virtues
2. Science to the Rescue.—Mycorrhiza: An Intimate Relationship; Types of Mycorrhizas; Structure of Ectomycorrhizas; Underground Warfare; The Collapse of Truffle Production; New Techniques
3. Identifying Truffle Species.—A Quick Lesson in Classification, Nomenclature, and Taxonomy; Identifying Species of Truffles; Périgord Black Truffle; Burgundy or Summer Truffle; Winter Truffle; Bagnoli Truffle or *Truffe Mésentérique*; Smooth Black Truffle; Asiatic Truffle; Italian White Truffle; Bianchetto and Other Pale-Coloured European Species; North American Pale-Coloured Truffles; Oregon Black Truffles; Sweet Truffle; Desert Truffles; Inedible and Poisonous Truffles; Other Species of Truffle; False Truffles; Identifying Truffle Species from Their Mycorrhizas; Identifying Truffles Using Molecular Techniques
4. The Habitats of Some Commercial Truffles.—Périgord Black Truffle; Burgundy or Summer Truffle; Italian White Truffle; Bianchetto; Desert Truffles

This was a delightful book covering most of everything you ever wanted to know about truffles. For instance, I learned that during medieval times, truffles were regarded as witches spit—quite a fall from the ‘food of the gods’ during the time of Roman rule! Dr. Hall tells us which truffles grow where and describes the flavor of each commercial genus/species of this treasured fungus.

The book is packed with useful information about appropriate growing conditions for specific truffle species, including the proper soil pH and temperature, weather conditions, sun/shade conditions, and trees under which the truffles grow best. Since commercial truffle production is something of the holy grail of expensive crops, this book provides practical information on the care and growing of truffles.

If you are interested in setting up a truffle plantation, this book provides information ranging from soil type to equipment needed to how to train your truffle dog. The authors even caution that truffle pigs may be less likely to give up their found truffle treasure than dogs. If you are just interested in purchasing great truffles for dinner, the authors warn of inferior truffles, tell you when various truffles are in season, and provide at least one French proverb, “Rain in July, truffles for Christmas.”

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is a lovely luxurious book with many pictures and drawings. That the authors have a wonderful sense of humor is evident in the writing. An extensive appendix lists everything you need to know about truffle production.—*Kay Yount, Tarrant County Master Gardener and BRIT Volunteer, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.*